

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 01908 01 OF 03 202027Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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P R 202017Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4579
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 01908

EXDIS

E.O.11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PARM MNUC FR PK
SUBJ: PAKISTAN REPROCESSING PLANT

REF: (A) PARIS 0678; (B) ISLAMABAD 0254; (C) PARIS 0615;
(D) STATE 06091; (E) ISLAMABAD 0554

1. SUMMARY: THE RECENT NEWS MEDIA FLAIR-UP ON THIS PROJECT APPEARS OVER. AS A RESULT THE GOF HAS NOW OFFICIALLY ACKNOWLEDGED HAVING PROPOSED TO STUDY A REDESIGN OF THE PLANT. CONCERNED ABOUT THE POTENTIAL POLITICAL HARM OF ANY FURTHER PUBLIC DISCLOSURE, IT IS REASONABLY CERTAIN THAT THE GOF WILL MAKE NO FURTHER PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON THIS ISSUE BEFORE MID-MARCH ELECTIONS. AFTER THAT DATE WE WILL HAVE TO PUSH THIS OR ANY NEW GOVERNMENT (THE LEFT HAS ONLY SAID THAT IT WOULD MAKE A CRITICAL REVIEW) TO MAKE PUBLIC A DECISION TO STOP THE PRESENT PLANT. END SUMMARY.

2. THE PUBLIC DUST SEEMS TO BE ABOUT SETTLED AFTER THE JANUARY 5-9 FLARE-UP ON THIS SUBJECT. WE BELIEVE THE GOF WILL NOT MAKE ANY FURTHER PUBLIC COMMENT PRIOR TO MID-MARCH ELECTIONS. SHOULD SOMETHING CAUSE
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ANOTHER PRESS FLARE-UP DURING THIS PERIOD, WE BELIEVE THAT ANY NECESSARY USG COMMENTS SHOULD STAY CLEAR OF COMMENTING ON US INVOLVEMENT IN THE FRENCH DECISION TO ALTER THE CONTRACT, PREFERABLY BE COORDINATED WITH THE QUAI OR, LACKING SUCH PRIOR COORDINATION, BE LIMITED TO "NO COMMENT." WE NOTE, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT A RECENT IPS ANALYSIS IN THE WIRELESS FILE DATED

JANUARY 11 MADE A DIRECT LINKAGE BETWEEN THE CARTER VISIT TO PARIS AND THE FRENCH ANNOUNCEMENT THAT IT WAS SEEKING TO ALTER ITS CONTRACT WITH PAKISTAN. THIS IS JUST THE SORT OF THING THAT COULD INFURIATE THE FRENCH IF IT CAME TO THEIR ATTENTION.

3. OUR POSITION VIS-A-VIS THE GLENN AMENDMENT SEEMS TO BE MORE TENUOUS. THE GOP, IN ITS JANUARY 7-8 COMMENT, HAS REJECTED PUBLICLY THE FRENCH PROPOSAL TO STUDY PLANT CHANGES TO PRECLUDE PRODUCTION OF PLUTONIUM FOR BOMBS. ASSUMING THE GOF DOESN'T RESUME SHIPMENTS, THE GOP WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE CONSTRUCTION OF THE PLANT PICKING UP PARTS OR SUB-PARTS WHERE POSSIBLE. IT IS REASONABLE TO ASSUME THAT EVENTUALLY THE PLANT WILL BE (CRUDELY) FINISHED AND BE PRODUCTIVE TO SOME (MINOR) DEGREE. THUS WE MAY MEET THE LETTER OF THE GLENN AMENDMENT BY NOT BEING ABLE TO PROVE SHIPMENTS FROM FRANCE OR INTO PAKISTAN; BUT IT WOULD BE MORE OBVIOUS THAT THE INTENT OF THE GLENN AMENDMENT HAD BEEN EVADED.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 PARIS 01908

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4. THE CURRENT SITUATION -- PUBLICLY A VALID CONTRACT AND A SUGGESTION TO STUDY PLANT CHANGES COUPLED WITH A NON-PUBLIC GOF DECISION NOT TO PROCEED WITH THE ORIGINAL PLANT -- RESTS UNEASILY WITH GISCARD'S GOVERNMENT. AS THE FRENCH ELECTION GROWS NEARER, THE PERCEIVED POTENTIAL HARM RESULTING FROM PUBLIC

DISCLOSURE OF THE GOF DECISION INCREASES. WITH NO SHIPMENTS FROM FRANCE SINCE JULY 1977, THE SLOW-DOWN IN PLANT CONSTRUCTION DUE TO LACK OF FRENCH SHIPMENTS SHOULD BECOME MORE VISIBLE WITH TIME. PAKISTAN MAY BE REACTING TO THE FRENCH "FREEZE" BY SELECTING AMERICAN OVER FRENCH CONTRACTORS (MFA NUCLEAR AFFAIRS DIRECTOR LOUET TOLD EMBOFF ON JANUARY 17 THAT HE HAD LEARNED THAT THE GOP WAS PROBABLY GOING TO DROP A POTENTIAL FRENCH AIRBUS CONTRACT IN FAVOR OF A US COMPETITOR). WE EXPECT THAT FRANCE WILL NOT CHANGE THE SITUATION PRIOR TO ITS ELECTIONS ALTHOUGH THERE MAY BE SOME NEED FELT BY THE FRENCH TO DO SOME HAND-HOLDING WITH PAKISTAN DURING THE INTERIM TO MINIMIZE ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES TO FRANCE.

5. AFTER THE FRENCH ELECTIONS WE BELIEVE WE MUST MOVE
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FRANCE TO MAKE PUBLIC ITS DECISION TO STOP ITS PARTICIPATION IN THE PRESENT PLANT. THIS SHOULD BE DONE BEFORE PAKISTAN HAS TOO MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO PRESSURE FRANCE, SUCH AS BY SWITCHING POTENTIAL CONTRACTS FROM FRANCE TO THE US. ALSO, WE MUST CONSIDER THE PROBABILITY OF PAKISTAN PROCEEDING, UNCONTROLLED, TO COMPLETE A PLANT THAT CAN PRODUCE SOME PLUTONIUM.

6. IN THE EVENT FRENCH OFFICIALS RAISE THIS TOPIC IN WASHINGTON, THE FOLLOWING IS PROVIDED:

A. TO BRIEFLY TIE TOGETHER THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS, AS WE UNDERSTAND THEM, THIS FLARE-UP BEGAN WITH A "LEAK" IN PARIS FROM SOME SOURCE TO ONE OR MORE NEWS REPORTERS ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 5. THE EARLIEST PRESS NOTE WE HAVE SEEN IS THE JANUARY 6 LE MONDE, AVAILABLE MID-AFTERNOON JANUARY 5, WHICH CARRIED A BRIEF STORY (SEE REF A) SAYING THE CONTRACT HAD BEEN SUSPENDED. ON JANUARY 6 AN AFP WIRE STORY (REF A) CARRIED AN (MFA) AUTHORIZED SOURCE STATEMENT THAT CONVERSATIONS REGARDING THE CONTRACT HAD NOT CEASED. ALSO ON JANUARY 6 LE MONDE (DATED JANUARY 7) CARRIED A LONGER STORY (REF A) WHICH CONTINUED THE EARLIER ARTICLE INTO A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PROJECT. THE GOP REACTION WAS CARRIED IN JANUARY 8 PAKISTANI PAPERS (REF B) AND A JANUARY 7 REUTERS WIRE STORY: (REUTERS) GOP OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN SAID PAKISTAN WOULD REFUSE ANY CHANGES . . . CHANGES ARE TO ELIMINATE MAKING

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 PARIS 01908

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PLUTONIUM FOR WEAPONS . . . RECALLED GUIRINGAUD'S
ASSURANCES OF SEPTEMBER 8. THE GOF MFA COMMUNIQUE CAME
OUT MID-DAY JANUARY 9 (REF C); FRANCE HONORS ITS
CONTRACTS . . . ON SEPTEMBER 9 PROPOSED TO STUDY PLANT
CHANGES TO NOT MAKE PURE PLUTONIUM. DEPARTMENT PRESS
GUIDANCE OF JANUARY 10 IN REF D. FRENCH PAPERS ECHOED
JANUARY 9 MFA STATEMENT DURING JANUARY 10-12 AND SINCE
THEN NOTHING HAS APPEARED IN THE DAILY PRESS. WEEKLY
TRADE JOURNALS REPORT THE STORY (SOME APPEARING AS
LATE AS THE EARLY PART OF THE WEEK OF JANUARY 16) BASED
ON THE JANUARY 9 MFA STATEMENT.

B. THE "LEAK" AND ITS TIMING REMAIN A MYSTERY.
PRESIDENT CARTER'S VISIT AND THE HISTORY OF THIS PROJECT
LED NEWS REPORTERS TO ASSUME THERE CERTAINLY WOULD BE
A STORY. THUS ANY LEAK WOULD FIND QUICK PRESS COVERAGE.
THE GOF IS QUITE UPSET THAT THE LEAK OCCURED ACCORDING
TO MFA NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION COORDINATOR, ANDRE
JACOMET. ALSO, HE TOLD EMBOFF THAT HE PERSONALLY
UNDERSTOOD THAT THE LEAK OCCURED ON THE EDGES OF A US
PRESS BRIEFING AT THE PALAIS DE CONGRESS THE EVENING
OF JANUARY 4. EMBOFF TOLD JACOMET THAT THERE WAS NO
PRESS BRIEFING THAT DAY; THAT THE JANUARY 5 PRESS
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BRIEFING TRANSCRIPT CONTAINED NO MENTION OF THE MATTER

AND THAT NO ONE ATTENDING THAT BRIEFING FROM THE
EMBASSY RECALLED ANY SIDE COMMENTS ON THE MATTER.
INFORMAL COMMENTS FROM OTHER QUAI CONTACTS ARE TO THE
EFFECT THAT THE LEAK CAME FROM THE QUAI OR THE ELYSEE.
WE ARE A BIT CONCERNED BY JACOMET'S COMMENT THAT THIS
COULD HAVE BEEN A US LEAK; WE HAVE SET THE RECORD
STRAIGHT TO OUR KNOWLEDGE AND PLAN NOT TO RAISE THIS
ASPECT AGAIN. (JACOMET MAY RAISE THIS MATTER WHEN
HE NEXT MEETS WITH WASHINGTON COUNTERPARTS.)
HARTMAN

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Message Attributes

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